

A.2.7 PLANETARY ASTRONOMY

1. Scope of Program

The Planetary Astronomy program supports ground-based telescopic observations that contribute to the understanding of the general properties and evolution of the Solar System planets and their satellites, and of asteroids and comets. The Planetary Astronomy program includes observations and analysis of data taken over entire range of wavelengths from the ultraviolet to radio. Although the investigations proposed to this program must contain an element of ground-based observing, the thrust of the research objectives must support NASA's planetary program objectives that either cannot be met by current spacecraft missions or that directly support specific current flight missions.

Ground-based observations that supplement NASA missions that will be returning significant amounts of data within the next three years are especially encouraged. Comet Encke is the first target comet for the CONTOUR Discovery mission. Note that the next apparition of 2P/Encke in 2003 is the most favorable return in terms of ground-based observations for several decades to come. The CONTOUR encounter date is November 12, 2003, and the Earth's closest approach (at 0.26 AU) is four days later. Therefore, this comet will be extremely well placed for ground-based observations over the interval from May through November 2003.

2. Programmatic Considerations

Presently about \$7.2M is budgeted for this program, of which \$2.7M is dedicated to facilities support (principally the Infrared Telescope Facility (IRTF)). Approximately 80 investigations are supported with the remaining funds. Approximately one-third of these awards are expiring, allowing proposers to this ROSS-2002 NRA to compete for about \$1.5M.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

As discussed in the *Summary of Solicitation* of this NRA, the Office of Space Science (OSS) is now using a single, unified set of instructions for the submission of proposals. This material is contained in the document entitled *NASA Guidebook for Proposers Responding to NASA Research Announcement – 2001* (or *NASA Guidebook for Proposers* for short) that is accessible by opening URL <http://research.hq.nasa.gov>, and linking through the menu item "Helpful References," or may be directly accessed online at URL <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/procurement/nraguidebook/>. This NRA's Summary of Solicitation also contains the schedule and instructions for the electronic submission of a *Notice of Intent* (NOI) to propose and a proposal's *Cover Page/Proposal Summary*, which now also includes the required *Budget Summary*, and the mailing address for the submission of a proposal.

Additional information may be obtained from the Discipline Scientist:

Dr. John J. Hillman
Solar System Exploration Division
Code SE
Office of Space Science
NASA Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001
Telephone: (202) 358-2314
E-mail: john.hillman@hq.nasa.gov